



SMALLPOX VACCINE

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- Although the threat is remote, the U.S. must be prepared to respond quickly in the event of a terrorist attack using smallpox virus.
- This response includes having sufficient smallpox vaccine available to stop an outbreak of smallpox.
- Smallpox vaccine is generally a safe and effective vaccine that, like all vaccines, carries the risk of serious adverse reactions for certain people.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC has been working closely with state and local health departments to maximize U.S. readiness to respond to an outbreak of smallpox (www.bt.cdc.gov). This work includes developing a Smallpox Response Plan and Guidelines document to assist state and local health departments in response planning and providing training workshops about this plan to these same groups.

The Department of Health and Human Services, CDC's parent agency, has contracted with the Acambis Pharmaceutical Company to increase CDC's supply of smallpox vaccine from about 15 million doses to about 286 million doses, enough to stop an outbreak of smallpox in the unlikely event that the need should ever arise. CDC has developed a vaccination strategy that would use the vaccine only where and when it is needed. This strategy will protect the people at greatest risk during a smallpox outbreak, while minimizing the risk of serious vaccine-associated adverse reactions among the general U.S. population.

Example of program in action: The [CDC Interim Smallpox Response Plan and Guidelines](#) gives detailed guidance on how local, state, and federal public health authorities would mobilize to halt an outbreak of smallpox. Also, CDC has assembled highly trained smallpox response teams that will quickly arrive at the location of a smallpox outbreak. These teams are prepared to investigate a smallpox outbreak, assist state and local health authorities, and provide smallpox vaccine, as needed, to stop an outbreak of smallpox.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC and state and local health departments will:

- Continue to enhance public health infrastructure;
- Continue to develop smallpox outbreak response capacity;
- Provide training on smallpox outbreak response to the public health workforce;
- Provide training on smallpox diagnosis and treatment to U.S. medical personnel;
- Continue to assure the supply of a smallpox vaccine stockpile.

For more information on this and other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/programs.

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